The Twins and the Whys

JOHN HENRY NASH LIBRARY
SAN FRANCISCO
PRESENTED TO THE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
ROBERT GORDON SPROUL, PRESIDENT.
BY
MR. AND MRS. MILTON S. RAY
CECILY, VIRGINIA AND ROSALYN RAY
AND THE
RAY OIL BURNER COMPANY
SAN FRANCISCO
NEW YORK

Paul Elder
& Company
Publishers

John Henry Nash
Printer

Z139.2
T66
1906t3

The
Twins and the
Whys

The Twins and the Whys

A Fairy Tale Worth While

by Susan F. Thompson

Paul Elder and Company
San Francisco and New York

Copyright, 1906, *by*
Paul Elder and Company

To My Margaret

So near is evil when we're weak
And cry *I can't*, yet ill
And good exist but to bespeak
Our character — our will.

Epictetus.

So near is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When Duty whispers low, Thou must,
The Will replies, *I can.*

Emerson.

The Twins and the Whys

IN A time so long ago that it would take four figures on your slates to tell the number of years, and in a country so far away that you might wander for years over mountains and across valleys without finding it, there lived two people, in a beautiful home. This home, with its lovely surroundings, had been given to them by a very rich man in whose castle they had faithfully served ever since they were little children. This man was exceedingly wise and knew many truths about how to keep well and how to possess things which nothing can destroy. He loved to teach these things to those who wished to learn; but he taught them only on condition that they come and serve him obediently; and no one who labored in his castle ever wished to go away. He had to teach them the very easiest

things first, because they could not learn the harder things right away, any more than you could learn to read before you had learned your A B C's. The very first thing that he taught was obedience; for that is the thing that every one must learn before he is ready for greater things. However, he tried to explain very clearly just why he asked certain things of them, and his reasons were so good that although one could not always quite understand the "why," he was very willing to obey.

The Twins and Their Queer Names.

NOW these two people about whom I am telling you, thought they were about as happy as they could be, living in their beautiful home, among the birds and flowers, and working for the wise man. But by and by they became a great deal happier, for there came to live with them two little twin girls. I could tell you quite a long story about the baby-hood of these little girls; however, I believe that you would rather hurry along with me, and get

acquainted with them as they were when they had grown to be about as big as you are. And first I shall tell you their names. I am sure that you will wonder how in the world they ever got such odd, long ones, and will look in the dictionary to find out what they mean. One was named Cantata and the other Cantatrice. Just for a little hint, I will tell you that they were singing, singing, singing from morning till night, and that no birds had sweeter voices.

However, as you will guess, these names were entirely too long for every-day use. When one tried to tell them something, he often forgot what he was going to say by the time he had finished saying their names; so, almost before they knew it, people began calling them "Cannie" and "Cantie." At last nearly every one forgot what their real names were, and I am not sure but that the girls, themselves, would have had trouble in remembering and pronouncing them and deciding which name belonged to which little girl.

Whether these names had anything to do with

their dispositions, is a question which I am not prepared to answer, — there are so many things around about us which seem strange until we learn the reason *why*, and then it is all so plain that we are surprised to find we could have been so stupid as not to have seen it all the time. Anyway, whether the names had anything to do with it or not, the fact remains that after the names were changed, the little girls sang less, and developed qualities which no one had ever noticed in them before.

You see, although they lived in a very beautiful home, and had many rich and beautiful things, they were not expected to be idle. Their mother was a very wise woman, having learned so many things from the great man, and she knew that one could not long be happy without something worth while to do. Her little girls, each, had certain duties which she was expected to perform. These duties nearly always consisted in doing something to make some one else happy. Besides this, they were taught to watch and see for themselves where

they might be helpful to those in need, or say a cheery or loving word where there was a place for it.

Although each child was taught in exactly the same way, there was a great difference in results: Cantie was always holding out a helping hand to some one, and saying, "Let me do that for you," or, "May I not help you?" Cantie was always looking the other way when such opportunities were in view, or saying, "Oh, I can't do that, I don't know how!" or, "It is too hard!" If, in their play, their dresses were torn, and this happened as often as it does to other little girls, Cannie would get a needle and thread, and say, "I've torn my dress, Mamma, but I am sure I can mend it if you will show me just a little." She soon learned to mend very neatly indeed, and was as proud of it as she had a right to be. But if Cantie had an accident to her clothes, she would say, "There, I've torn my dress, and I just *can't* mend it!" If her mother was too busy to attend to it, the tear would go unmended, and we all know that a hole

never gets any smaller by letting it go. And so it often happened that Cantie was obliged to wear a much larger patch or darn than her sister, because of the lack of the "stitch in time."

It was so in nearly everything. In music Cantie was really the brighter; but if there was a phrase that seemed a little difficult, she would say, "Oh, I can't play that!" and would go off about something else. It was the same with other things, until at last she came to believe that she really could not do the things which looked hard; and you know if we *believe* that we cannot do a thing, it actually seems as if we could not. In a wonderful old book which their mother had, and which they called the "Wisdom Book," it was written: "The greatest sin is unbelief," meaning, I think, that unbelief is the cause of our leaving undone many of the good things which were ours to do. Cantie came to believe so thoroughly that she could not do things, that she at last stopped trying, and, as trying is the proof of whether we really can or cannot, therefore, the more she didn't, the

more she couldn't. Soon she had become a very useless little girl indeed. And, as she had so little to occupy her hands and her thoughts, she had a great deal of time to think about herself and the things she wished for but did not need, and the things she would like to do and couldn't, until at last, she had become most unhappy and hadn't the least idea of what was the matter with her.

The Mother Starts Them Upon a Journey.

HE wise mother was watching her small daughters, and giving much time and thought to guiding them rightly, and she was perfectly sure that Cantie would overcome this wrong thinking, when she was old enough to see things clearly and to learn lessons from the experiences which came to her. When, at last, the little girls seemed to have reached the proper age, the mother decided to send them upon a journey, all by themselves. She planned everything very carefully indeed, and then, one night, told them that they were to start the next morning

to go to a beautiful house which they would find at the end of a day's journey. They were to go alone and must walk all the way. She told them that she, herself, had to go away, and could not be there to see them off in the morning, but that she would prepare everything for an early start. Both girls were very eager to undertake the journey.

However, when morning came, and they found the clothing which had been prepared for them by the wise mother, their eagerness changed to dismay. Everything was so very different from what they were accustomed to wear. Even Cannie hesitated when she saw the heavy shoes, the coarse, plain dress, and the wide-brimmed straw hat; but she felt so sure that her mother had a good reason for choosing these things for her, that she made the best of it and hurried into her clothes, trying not to let her dissatisfaction cloud the morning sunshine.

Now, in Cantie's room you may guess that there was a very different scene. She began with the shoes—"Such coarse things, I can't wear

them! I don't believe I could walk a step in them!" As her mother had not really commanded them to wear the clothes which she had selected, Cantie threw aside the shoes, and put on her new, fine ones. The next was the dress, and, as usual, the protest—"I can't wear such an ugly, horrid thing as that!" And out came her soft mull frock, with its ruffles and laces and delicate trimmings. Of course when she came to the hat—that was not to be thought of with the dainty frock and fine shoes; so she put on the pretty new white one, with its flowers and ribbons, and the gay parasol must go with that, to shade her face. Finally, after much worrying and fretting, she was ready, and a great contrast there was between the two little girls, as they set out upon their journey.

Scarcely were they outside of the gate, when Cantie discovered that it was not at all easy to carry a parasol and a lunch basket, and, at the same time, keep her hat from blowing away. She peeped beneath the lid of the basket, and finding that it contained only some bread and butter, and

reflecting that she was not in the least hungry, she decided to leave it behind. Cannie, however, trudged along with her basket, confident that her mother knew what was best for her.

They Cross a River—The First Why.

THE morning was delightfully pleasant and the road level and smooth for the first few hours of their way; and as there had been a gentle shower in the night, there was no dust to trouble them or to spoil Cantie's fine clothes. Indeed, Cantie spent the greater part of the time in thinking how much nicer she looked than her sister, and how foolish Cannie had been to put on those very ugly garments.

After traveling for some time they came to a rather broad stream of water which they were obliged to cross. As it was very shallow, no one had ever thought it necessary to build a bridge over it, and the stepping-stones were too far apart for such small girls to cross upon. The mother knew

of this stream, and that was one reason that she had supplied the strong, water-proof shoes. When they came to this stream, Cannie wished to cross it at once, for she knew that her shoes would not let the water through; but Cantie knew that her fine, thin shoes would become soaked and ruined. She was afraid to take them off and wade across barefooted, since the stones beneath the water looked very sharp and slippery, and the water flowed quite swiftly.

As Cannie was a very obliging little girl, always glad to do what she could to make others happy, she consented to hunt for a bridge. They spent a long hour in vain searching up and down the crooked little stream, but at last were compelled to return to the road and cross over as best they could. Cannie would willingly have carried Cantie over, but, unfortunately, Cantie happened to be somewhat the heavier of the two, although they were exactly the same age. Of course Cantie made a good deal of fuss before she reached the other side, and Cannie helped her all that she

could; however, in spite of everything, it was a very ill-tempered and uncomfortable little girl who at last stepped upon dry land again and tried to wring the water out of her skirt which had become draggled from her slipping and stumbling upon the wet stones.

One Lunch for Two—The Second Why.

NOW, as they had spent so much time in looking for a bridge, and as they had been too excited to eat much breakfast, they began to feel quite hungry. Cantie, you will remember, had left her lunch-basket behind, because it was troublesome to carry, and because it contained only bread and butter. She now began to think how exceedingly good that same bread and butter would taste if she only had it. Cannie was generous, however, and they sat down in the shade of a big tree while she divided her own lunch with her sister, although there was really only enough for one hungry little girl, and both could easily have eaten twice as much, and

even more. While Cantie was eating, her shoes had been drying, and when she started on again, still in a very bad humor because she was still hungry, she found that, in drying, they had shrunk so that they pinched and cramped her feet terribly. It was right here that Cantie began to understand her mother's reasons for providing for them exactly as she had. The mother had always been very ready to explain the "why" of everything that she required of them; but she was not there to explain this time, and they were fast finding out the "whys" for themselves, very much to Cantie's discomfort.

As for Cannie, her shoes seemed to have become more soft and easy for their wetting, and it seemed to her that she had never worn more comfortable or better-fitting ones in all her life, although at first they had seemed so clumsy. Consequently she was thanking her mother, in her grateful little heart, for knowing so well what was best for her, and was now glad that she had been sensible enough to obey.

The Wonderful Water-proof Clothes.

AS THEY came out of the wood, where they had eaten their luncheon, Cantie suddenly discovered that she had left her parasol, and, as the sun was very hot, Cannie proposed that they go back and try to find it. Back they went, and although they searched for a long time, they could not find the particular tree under which they had eaten, nor could they catch a glimpse of the parasol. They did find out one thing: that the grass upon which they had sat was damp, and had left several bright green stains upon Cantie's pretty mull frock. As you know, no amount of rubbing with handkerchiefs has the slightest effect upon grass stains, and when they emerged from the woods the second time, Cantie was no longer thinking of how nice she looked, but rather of the mussed and stained dress and the very painful shoes. Soon she had more troubles to add to these, for the sun was very bright and hot, and her hat was of the thinnest lace, scarcely

protecting her at all. In a short time her eyes were dazzled and smarting, and her face and neck were burned almost to a blister.

Cannie found her hat, with its broad brim, to be a comfort indeed. It shielded her eyes and kept the sun's rays from touching her face and neck. She would gladly have shared it with her sister; but you know that two cannot wear one hat at the same time, and, besides, Cantie was really a very just little girl, and she plainly saw that all of her suffering was caused by her own faults. She would not allow Cannie to be made uncomfortable because of her, although she was quite cross in her refusal to wear the broad-brimmed hat a part of the time. And now, while they were out in the open, with no shelter in sight, a sudden shower came up. In a moment Cantie was drenched to the skin. The lace hat and the thin, soft dress were almost no protection, and as the clouds which hid the sun were dense and black, and a chilly wind sprang up, she was soon shivering with cold. In fact, Cantie was about the most

miserable little girl that you could imagine, and she was finding out more "whys" every minute.

Cannie, however, was having no trouble at all, excepting that caused by her sister's discomfort. Her broad hat proved to be waterproof and kept its shape perfectly, and her dress shed the rain without letting a drop through. In fact, Cannie was finding out some very wonderful things about these clothes of hers. She had found that the dress was dirtproof as well as waterproof, and, instead of showing any spots or stains or becoming harsh with the rain, it seemed to be constantly growing softer and whiter and smoother in texture until it really began to look very pretty indeed. And the more wonders and "whys" that she found out, the more she loved the good mother who had planned these things for her.

It was well for Cantie that there was no mirror in which she could see herself. She had become a very queer-looking little girl indeed. Her hat had been trimmed with a wreath of beautiful red and pink roses and their green stems and leaves; but

the rain had washed out all the color and it had run in streams down her face and dress until she looked like a little Indian maiden in full war-paint, although, come to think of it, I believe that little Indian maidens do not paint up and go to war. But, anyway, she did not look at all like a pretty little girl dressed in her best clothes and going on a visit.

The Cooking Lesson — Cantie's Dinner.

THEIR mother had told them to stop for dinner at the home of a friend of hers; but the dinner hour was so long past, because of their many delays, that when they reached the house they found only a note telling them that the friend had gone away, having decided that they were not coming. But thinking that they might perhaps arrive late, she had left things so that they could prepare their own dinner if they wished. I rather think that their wise mother had something to do with this. I am quite sure that if there had not been a "why" to become acquainted with, the good lady would have

left something cooked and ready for them. However, as it was, there was everything *to* cook, but not one thing cooked. The note told them where there was wood for the fire, and where they might find everything necessary for cooking dinner. There was also a folded paper marked in their mother's writing: "To be read when dinner is prepared, but before eating."

Now Cannie was not at all disconcerted over the condition of things. She had learned to cook, just as people who are anxious to help others always do learn to do things, and, as her clothes had kept her comfortable and the cool north wind had refreshed her, she immediately set to work to prepare the meal. But Cantie felt differently about it: "Oh, dear, you know I can't cook!" she cried, "and I'm so tired, and my feet hurt so! I simply must rest."

Cannie was full of sympathy, as she knew what a hard time her sister had been having, so she fixed the pillows on the couch and told her to lie down and try to sleep a little, while she got dinner ready.

In a short time everything was prepared and the two girls sat down to the table, just about as hungry as two little girls could be. However, the first thing to do was to read the note from their mother. Cantie unfolded it and read aloud: "*Whosoever will not work, shall not eat.*"

For several minutes Cannie and Cantie sat and looked at the nice, hot dinner spread before them, and then, for almost the first time in her life, Cannie said, "*I can't.*" "I just *can't* eat any dinner if you may not," she said. Cantie was too dismayed to say anything at all.

Presently, however, Cannie jumped up. "I'll tell you. We will hurry and get your dinner ready, and then we will eat together. I will show you exactly how to do everything."

At first Cantie was inclined to refuse and go hungry. She was entirely too conscientious to eat anything that Cannie had prepared, after reading what her mother had written; but everything looked so good and smelled so good that, very reluctantly, she consented to Cannie's plan, and

prepared to take her first lesson in cooking. It is surprising how much one can accomplish when one really tries. Cantie was astonished to find how very easy it was to prepare the dishes which had always seemed to her to be so much trouble; and she was prouder and happier, when she next sat down to the table, than she had ever been before in her life.

The two girls had a very jolly time over their meal, and both were so delighted over Cantie's success, that they forgot all about being tired; and when they had washed the dishes and straightened up the house again, and were ready to start once more upon their journey, they felt almost as fresh as when they had left home in the morning. Cantie caught one glimpse of herself in the mirror before starting. In that moment she saw a very large number of "Whys" and made an equal number of good resolutions. You will remember that Cannie's dress had seemed to grow softer and finer and whiter all the time, no matter what hard usage it had received; but poor Cantie's

gown showed every spot and stain, and now, since she had worked about the stove, it carried a large scorch, as well as many black marks and several large rents. However, she said nothing. She felt that she had deserved all of her discomfort and unhappiness—she had learned the A B C's of experience.

The Last Why—Berries and Thorns.

THE children walked along the road in silence for quite a long way, and at last their path led them up a high hill which was covered with bushes. These bushes bore many sharp thorns which seemed to reach out and catch hold of everything that came near them. They were also laden with the most delicious berries, all ready to be had for the picking. Cannie now drew from her pocket a pair of thick gloves which her mother had placed there for her. When Cantie saw them she turned away her head, remembering how she had laughed at the clumsy pair that she had found in the pocket of

the dress which she would not wear. Cannie was soon picking berries, but Cantie, after a few efforts, which resulted in dreadfully scratched hands and a sadly torn dress, gave it up; nor would she take a single one of those which Cannie picked. That note of her mother's made her feel she had no right to profit by Cannie's work and obedience.

When they reached the place where the berries were most plentiful, and the thorns the longest and sharpest, they came upon an old woman with an empty pail by her side, who was crying bitterly. Her hands were bare and scratched, and her dress and shoes indicated by their many rents that she had been trying to pick some berries. She wore nothing upon her head, and her hair was thin and showed the marks of the thorns which had tried to prevent her from getting their treasure. She was not a pleasant person to look at, but the girls never thought of being afraid of her. Instead, they approached and asked why she was crying, and if there was anything they could do for her. She told them that she had come out to gather

berries, hoping to sell enough to buy clothes which she needed very much; but the thorns scratched her so that she had been obliged to give it up in bitter disappointment.

Both of the girls eagerly offered to help her, but immediately after, Cantie bit her lip. "Oh, I can't!" she said, and she said it with more real sorrow than she had ever felt before. Cannie took the pail, however, and immediately set to work to fill it. "Isn't there anything that I can do?" asked Cantie, looking at her, ruefully. She wanted so much to do something to help the old woman.

Cannie stopped picking berries for a moment. "Don't you think you could go and cheer her up a little?" she asked.

Cantie did not feel very cheerful, herself, and she opened her mouth to say, "I can't," but she suddenly stopped, and went and sat down beside the old woman. By the time that Cannie had filled the pail, the two were laughing and chatting together like old friends, and, when the old woman thanked Cannie for the berries, she thanked Cantie,

just as earnestly, for her bright, loving words. I think that Cantie was, for a moment, even happier than Cannie. It was a new experience for her to make some one else glad and grateful, and right here she found a large and beautiful "Why": why it is good to bring happiness into the lives of others.

The End of the Journey.

AND now they turned into an exceedingly narrow path, so narrow that the bushes and briers touched them upon either side and nearly met over their heads. Cantie's shoes had, by this time, become so worn that they afforded scarcely any protection at all to her feet. The narrow, French heels were constantly catching upon the roots and weeds and tripping her up, and her ankles had been turned and wrenched so many times that she could hardly walk. Some time before, the sun had gone from sight over the hill and the air was growing cooler and cooler. The bushes were soon covered with dew which drenched Cantie as thoroughly as the

rain had done in the morning, though Cannie's dress seemed only to grow softer and finer and whiter and more beautiful for the wearing of the thorns and the washing of the dew.

As they went along this narrow way they could feel the bushes clutching at their clothing as they passed. It was growing too dark to see. In fact, it grew dark so fast that they soon would have been unable to see a step before them, except for a wonderful thing that happened. As it grew darker and darker, Cannie's dress grew whiter and whiter, until it shown so brightly that it made a very soft light all around, so that they could easily see their way. It is always so with the "garment of righteousness": it makes a light for our own feet and also for those who walk with us. By this soft radiance, Cannie and Cantie walked along, until, presently, they heard a voice calling to them, and they came out upon a smooth lawn before a spacious house. The brilliant lights dazzled them for an instant, but they had recognized the voice, and in a moment they were in the arms

of their loving mother, who had been watching eagerly for their coming.

"My little Cannie and Cantie!" she cried, pressing them closely to her; but Cantie laid her hand over her mother's mouth.

"Not that name, please, Mamma," she said.

"What do you mean, my little girl?" asked the mother.

"I mean that I am not 'Cantie' any more, but 'Connie'. That means 'Confidence'; for the 'Whys' have taught me that you know best, and I am going to be obedient, and never, never say 'I can't' any more."

The mother kissed both little girls lovingly, and led them across the lawn and into their own beautiful home which seemed fairly to glow with the warmth and radiance of its cheery welcome. Cantie's or, rather, Connie's face was so bright and shining, that no one noticed the torn dress and tangled hair, or that her shoes were in shreds; and even she forgot it in the new-found happiness which the "Whys" had brought to her.

HERE ENDETH THE TWINS AND THE WHYS
A FAIRY TALE THAT IS WORTH WHILE, BY
SUSAN F. THOMPSON. WITH DECORATIONS
BY SPENCER WRIGHT. PUBLISHED BY PAUL
ELDER AND COMPANY AND PRINTED FOR
THEM AT THE TOMOYE PRESS, NEW YORK
UNDER THE DIRECTION OF J. H. NASH, IN
THE YEAR NINETEEN HUNDRED AND SIX

Z237.2
T66
1906t3